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ble of obstructing the universal plan, which, if we could view it in all its parts, would be found perfect, and calculated to produce to the whole the greatest sum of good.

"Hope humbly then : with trembling pinions soar :

"Wait the great teacher death ; and God adore."

On the other hand, let us not be careless as to the immutable and essential distinction between vice and virtue, or give way to a species of indifference, or laxity of principle. At least let us strictly judge ourselves ; and impartially and without selfish bias scrutinize our own motives. We may indulge in a most injurious mis-named charity to ourselves, and also to the failings of others. To try to conciliate others to our failings, we may, by a false charity, shut our eyes to their failings, and under the name and appearance of a virtue, we may encourage vice in ourselves and others, and lose the standard of moral excellence. By seeming to palliate vice in others a cheap popularity is obtained, and a character for kindness of heart established on very insufficient grounds. Sincerity is a duty we owe to ourselves, and to the public. It is obvious to those who look at those things, how readily and lightly many persons are to give good characters to those who are far from deserving them ; merely that they may purchase good will to themselves, by giving what costs them nothing, but a violation of the great duty of sincerity. Others from a false tenderness speak well of all who do not immediately thwart themselves. This is an error, and often arises from imbecility of mind.

We frequently hear the jargon of an unmeaning cant about the degeneracy of human nature, even

from those, who in words disavow the doctrine of depravity. But the slang of cant is common to those who differ in almost every other point. In the mouths of some, it is a favourite phrase, when they hear of wrong doings, "Alas ! poor human nature !" Human nature is exactly what we choose to make it. It is sometimes seen debased, as in the case of the debauchee, and libertine ; and we have also seen it exalted to great purity, and disinterestedness. Let us dismiss all palliating excuses for vice, and by holding up and admiring a high standard, form ourselves on the best models. While some have debased human nature, examples may easily be found, who have highly exalted it, and rescued it from the disgrace brought upon it by others, and shown to what heights of virtue it is possible to attain.

I have endeavoured to draw the line between a rigid censoriousness, which is in danger of conducting us to the barren and uncomfortable regions of misanthropy ; and that laxity of principle which confounds the distinctions of morality. A man should especially labour, by avoiding the latter, to keep peace in his own mind ; and being at peace with himself, he is in a disposition better fitted to be at peace with the world. He becomes contented with his own allotment, when he has not the torment of self reproach, and learns to confide. He does not believe "that whatever is, is right," at least with respect to moral agency ; but he trusts that all will in the end be for the best, and that even in this imperfect state of things, good decidedly preponderates over evil. K,

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

YOUR correspondent Alexis has made some good observations,

in your last Magazine, on the decline of superstition, and the increase of knowledge; but I am sorry to observe, that he is illiberal in his censure of "*old women*." He seems to suppose, that they are peculiarly well adapted for collecting and relating tales of superstition. As I am firmly convinced, that females are capable of much higher and nobler attainments, and that all knowledge is not confined to one sex, I will assert, that the number of superstitious and ignorant *old men and women* are equal.

It has been much the custom with some writers, when they wish to apply a forcible and contemptuous epithet to an insignificant person, to say, "Oh! he is an old woman;" as if the female sex were such completely worthless beings, that the term, "*old woman*," was the most degrading epithet which could be invented. I lately met with a letter on this subject, in the Liverpool Mercury, and as it points out the folly of using the term "*old woman*" as a contemptuous epithet, I shall take the liberty of giving a short extract from it:—"When I first heard the expression of *old woman* applied," says Penelope Prism, "I was not aware of its modern signification. It was in a conversation on the police of the town; when, having inquired of what the police consisted, an elderly gentleman replied, 'Of *old women*.' This to me was strange, because it was new; but I thought little more of the matter, till last night, when a party of gentlemen were assembled in our parlour, discoursing of politics, and it was observed, in allusion to the two representatives of some borough or county, that the one was a systematic place-hunter, and the other, 'a mere *old woman*.' Yes, 'a mere *old woman*.' This was not to be misunderstood; a new light flash-

ed across my mind; I was the only aged female in company, and of course had to bear the whole brunt of this new application of the doctrine of personal identity. From politics the conversation turned to the state of our local affairs; the nature of corporations was discussed; and the merits of our common-council men. This latter subject was beginning to be interesting, when my brother put an end to the argument by abruptly changing the subject, exclaiming, beforehand, 'a parcel of *old women*.' This badge of distinction was next liberally bestowed on divers justices of the peace. Simon Meanwell, Esq. was allowed to be an upright justice:—"Why, yes, replied one of the company, he certainly intends well; very well; but, after all, he is little better than an *old woman*.'"

In the age of chivalry, men, by seeming to consider females as ideal divinities, deprived them of their just rights. Chivalry is now out of fashion, and I hope the day will soon arrive, when females will be considered neither as inferior nor superior to the other sex, but as equals. When a female discovers folly, or ignorance, let her be censured, but let us not unjustly call every superstitious or insignificant person an *old woman*.

If, in former times, illiberal prejudice so far prevailed, as to debar females from the important benefits of a good education, and that they soared to no higher objects, than "to sew, to spin, to die, and be forgot;" yet even they were useful, and man, proud man, was indebted to them for many domestic comforts. The increase of knowledge has now given more enlightened ideas of the female sex, and although some of them may be so far mistaken, as to suppose, that a few superficial accomplishments, are the chief ob-

jects of their "beings end, and aim," and that they may carelessly view

....."The beauteous mind,
For virtue, bliss, eternity design'd,"

as an object not worthy of attention and improvement. They may also be afraid to study, lest they should be ridiculed by some ignorant coxcomb, who might say,

"Banish, my fair, those studious looks,
Oh! what should beauty learn from crabbed books;
Sweetly to speak, and sweetly smile, be thine,
Beware, nor change that dimple to a line!"

After contemplating the frivolity of such characters, and observing all the time occupied in useless pursuits, while the mind is left uncultivated, a man of sense and intelligence may be excused, if he hastily form an unfavourable opinion of females. He may justly exclaim,

....."Are these your joys?
These all your cares?"

But let him not, for the folly of a few individuals, condemn the whole sex; let him reflect on all the fops and coxcombs of his acquaintance, and he will find, that frivolity and ignorance are not confined to one sex.

When females take care to improve their minds, they are rational, intelligent beings. Many of them are possessed of true taste, vivid imaginations, solid sense, fixed principles, and all the valuable qualities which adorn human nature. The cultivation of their minds does not prevent them from being useful in domestic life; as learning and good sense are not incompatible with the most minute attention to all the peculiar duties, as well as all the elegant accomplishments which belong to the female character.

If it were necessary to prove, that

females are capable of the highest attainments, I could adduce a number of highly respectable names; but I shall only refer any person who may have doubts on this subject, to the various modern publications of females, whose talents have been directed to the noble object of instructing and improving mankind.

When a female has once entered on the paths of knowledge, with a fixed resolution of improving herself, she will be fully equal in sense and intelligence to any of the other sex, who have had the same opportunities of instruction; but, unfortunately, knowledge has been so much decried, and ideas of inferiority so strongly impressed on the minds of females, that they have been too frequently content to remain in ignorance. It is ungenerous, first to enslave the mind, and then to condemn females for being triflers.

As man cannot degrade the female sex, without degrading the whole human race, and as no talent or virtue is exclusively masculine, or no fault or folly exclusively feminine, let not the contest in future be, which sex shall be the most ignorant, but which shall be the most enlightened.

CORNELIA.

For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.

ON MODERN GEOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY.

AMONG the discoveries of the last fifty years, Geography and Topography appear to have come in for a full portion. The former has been particularly enriched by the discoveries of Wallis, Cook, La Perouse, and Vancouver; and in our list of travellers, Bruce, Valliant, Barrow, and the unfortunate Mungo Park, have added considerably to